



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2021-0964; Project Identifier 2018-SW-051-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; Leonardo S.p.a. Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: The FAA proposes to adopt a new airworthiness directive (AD) for all Leonardo S.p.a. Model AB139 and AW139 helicopters. This proposed AD was prompted by the identification of certain parts needing maintenance actions, including life limits and maintenance tasks. This proposed AD would require incorporating into maintenance records requirements (airworthiness limitations), as specified in a European Aviation Safety Agency (now European Union Aviation Safety Agency) (EASA) AD, which is proposed for incorporation by reference (IBR). The FAA is proposing this AD to address the unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: The FAA must receive comments on this proposed AD by [INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: You may send comments, using the procedures found in 14 CFR 11.43 and 11.45, by any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to <https://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- Fax: (202) 493-2251.

- Mail: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590.

- Hand Delivery: Deliver to Mail address between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

For material that is proposed for IBR in this AD, contact EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; telephone +49 221 8999 000; email ADs@easa.europa.eu; Internet www.easa.europa.eu. You may find this material on the EASA website at <https://ad.easa.europa.eu>. You may view this service information at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call (817) 222-5110.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2021-0964; or in person at Docket Operations between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this NPRM, the EASA AD, any comments received, and other information. The street address for Docket Operations is listed above.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kristi Bradley, Program Manager, COS Program Management Section, Operational Safety Branch, Compliance & Airworthiness Division, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Fort Worth, TX 76177; telephone (817) 222-5110; email kristin.bradley@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

The FAA invites you to send any written relevant data, views, or arguments about this proposal. Send your comments to an address listed under ADDRESSES. Include

“Docket No. FAA-2021-0964; Project Identifier 2018-SW-051-AD” at the beginning of your comments. The most helpful comments reference a specific portion of the proposal, explain the reason for any recommended change, and include supporting data. The FAA will consider all comments received by the closing date and may amend this proposal because of those comments.

Except for Confidential Business Information (CBI) as described in the following paragraph, and other information as described in 14 CFR 11.35, the FAA will post all comments received, without change, to <https://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information you provide. The agency will also post a report summarizing each substantive verbal contact received about this NPRM.

Confidential Business Information

CBI is commercial or financial information that is both customarily and actually treated as private by its owner. Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552), CBI is exempt from public disclosure. If your comments responsive to this NPRM contain commercial or financial information that is customarily treated as private, that you actually treat as private, and that is relevant or responsive to this NPRM, it is important that you clearly designate the submitted comments as CBI. Please mark each page of your submission containing CBI as “PROPIN.” The FAA will treat such marked submissions as confidential under the FOIA, and they will not be placed in the public docket of this NPRM. Submissions containing CBI should be sent to Kristi Bradley, Program Manager, COS Program Management Section, Operational Safety Branch, Compliance & Airworthiness Division, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Fort Worth, TX 76177; telephone (817) 222-5110; email kristin.bradley@faa.gov. Any commentary that the FAA receives which is not specifically designated as CBI will be placed in the public docket for this rulemaking.

Background

The EASA, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA AD 2018-0132, dated June 21, 2018 (EASA AD 2018-0132) (also referred to as the Mandatory Continuing Airworthiness Information, or the MCAI), to correct an unsafe condition for all Leonardo S.p.A. Model AB139 and AW139 helicopters.

This proposed AD was prompted by the identification of certain parts needing maintenance actions, including life limits and maintenance tasks. The FAA is proposing this AD to address the failure of certain parts, which could result in the loss of control of the helicopter. See EASA AD 2018-0132 for additional background information.

FAA's Determination

These helicopters have been approved by EASA and are approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to the FAA's bilateral agreement with the European Union, EASA has notified the FAA about the unsafe condition described in its AD. The FAA is proposing this AD after evaluating all known relevant information and determining that the unsafe condition described previously is likely to exist or develop on other helicopters of these same type designs.

Related Service information Under 1 CFR Part 51

EASA AD 2018-0132 requires certain actions and associated thresholds and intervals, including life limits and maintenance tasks. These requirements (airworthiness limitations) include new life limits for a certain part-numbered main rotor damper, tail gear box center housing, and tail assembly; and new maintenance tasks (e.g., inspections for cracking) for the fuselage structure assembly (STA 5700, RH/LH side), and tail structure assembly (tail/rear fuselage attachment fittings).

Proposed AD Requirements in this NPRM

This proposed AD would require incorporating into maintenance records requirements (airworthiness limitations), which are specified in EASA AD 2018-0132 described previously, except as discussed under “Differences Between this Proposed AD and the MCAI.”

ADs Mandating Airworthiness Limitations

The FAA has previously mandated airworthiness limitations by mandating each airworthiness limitation task (e.g., inspections and replacements (life limits)) as an AD requirement or issuing ADs that require revising the airworthiness limitations section (ALS) of the existing maintenance manual or instructions for continued airworthiness to incorporate new or revised inspections and life limits. This proposed AD, however, would require operators to incorporate into maintenance records required by 14 CFR 91.417(a)(2) or 135.439(a)(2), as applicable for your rotorcraft, the requirements (airworthiness limitations) specified in an MCAI AD. The FAA does not intend this as a substantive change. For these ADs, the ALS requirements for operators are the same but are complied with differently. Requiring the incorporation of the new ALS requirements into the maintenance records, rather than requiring individual ALS tasks (e.g., repetitive inspections and replacements), requires operators to record AD compliance once after updating the maintenance records, rather than after every time the ALS task is completed.

In addition, paragraph (h) of the proposed AD allows operators to incorporate later approved revisions of the ALS document as specified in the Ref. Publications section of EASA AD 2018-0132 without the need for an alternative method of compliance (AMOC).

Differences Between this Proposed AD and the MCAI

Paragraph (1) of EASA AD 2018-0132 requires compliance with actions and associated thresholds and intervals, including life limits and maintenance tasks, from the effective date of EASA AD 2018-0132. Paragraph (3) of EASA AD 2018-0132 requires

incorporating the actions and associated thresholds and intervals, including life limits and maintenance tasks, into the approved maintenance program within 12 months after the effective date of EASA AD 2018-0132. This proposed AD requires incorporating into maintenance records requirements (airworthiness limitations) within 30 days after the effective date of this AD.

Costs of Compliance

The FAA estimates that this AD, if adopted as proposed, would affect 130 helicopters of U.S. Registry. Labor rates are estimated at \$85 per work-hour. Based on these numbers, the FAA estimates the following costs to comply with this proposed AD. Incorporating requirements (airworthiness limitations) into maintenance records would require about 2 work-hours for a cost of \$170 per helicopter and a cost of \$22,100 for the U.S. fleet.

Authority for This Rulemaking

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator. Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs, describes in more detail the scope of the Agency's authority.

The FAA is issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements. Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

Regulatory Findings

The FAA determined that this proposed AD would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This proposed AD would not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States, or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.

For the reasons discussed, I certify this proposed regulation:

- (1) Is not a “significant regulatory action” under Executive Order 12866,
- (2) Would not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska, and
- (3) Would not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA proposes to amend 14 CFR part 39 as follows:

PART 39 - AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

- 1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

- 2. The FAA amends § 39.13 by adding the following new airworthiness directive:

Leonardo S.p.a.: Docket No. FAA-2021-0964; Project Identifier 2018-SW-051-AD.

(a) Comments Due Date

The FAA must receive comments on this airworthiness directive (AD) by
[INSERT DATE 45 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL
REGISTER].

(b) Affected ADs

None.

(c) Applicability

This AD applies to all Leonardo S.p.a. Model AB139 and AW139 helicopters, certificated in any category.

(d) Subject

Joint Aircraft Service Component (JASC) Code: 5101, Aircraft Structures; and 6300, Main Rotor Drive Systems.

(e) Unsafe Condition

This AD was prompted by the identification of certain parts needing maintenance actions, including life limits and maintenance tasks. The FAA is issuing this AD to address the failure of certain parts, which could result in the loss of control of the helicopter.

(f) Compliance

Comply with this AD within the compliance times specified, unless already done.

(g) Required Action

Within 30 days after the effective date of this AD, incorporate into maintenance records required by 14 CFR 91.417(a)(2) or 135.439(a)(2), as applicable for your rotorcraft, the requirements (airworthiness limitations) specified in paragraph (1) of European Aviation Safety Agency (now European Union Aviation Safety Agency) (EASA) AD 2018-0132, dated June 21, 2018 (EASA AD 2018-0132).

(h) Provisions for Alternative Requirements (Airworthiness Limitations)

After the action required by paragraph (g) of this AD has been done, no alternative requirements (airworthiness limitations) are allowed unless they are approved as specified in the provisions of the “Ref. Publications” section of EASA AD 2018-0132.

(i) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)

(1) The Manager, International Validation Branch, FAA, has the authority to approve AMOCs for this AD, if requested using the procedures found in 14 CFR 39.19. In accordance with 14 CFR 39.19, send your request to your principal inspector or local Flight Standards District Office, as appropriate. If sending information directly to the manager of the International Validation Branch, send it to the attention of the person identified in paragraph (j)(2) of this AD. Information may be emailed to: 9-AVS-AIR-730-AMOC@faa.gov.

(2) Before using any approved AMOC, notify your appropriate principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office/certificate holding district office.

(j) Related Information

(1) For information about EASA AD 2018-0132, contact the EASA, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer 3, 50668 Cologne, Germany; telephone +49 221 8999 000; email ADs@easa.europa.eu; Internet www.easa.europa.eu. You may find this EASA AD on the EASA website at <https://ad.easa.europa.eu>. You may view this material at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177. For information on the availability of this material at the FAA, call (817) 222-5110. This material may be found in the AD docket at <https://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2021-0964.

(2) For more information about this AD, contact Kristi Bradley, Program Manager, COS Program Management Section, Operational Safety Branch, Compliance & Airworthiness Division, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Fort Worth, TX 76177; telephone (817) 222-5110; email kristin.bradley@faa.gov.

Issued on November 4, 2021.

Lance T. Gant, Director,
Compliance & Airworthiness Division,
Aircraft Certification Service.

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